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A Mother's Memoirs

Scenario Supplement for the "Forces of Cularin" Trilogy

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Former Living Force Plot Director and Campaign Designer Morrie Mullins presents the latest in our monthly series of supplements to the campaign's newest scenarios. In "A Mother's Memoirs," the Tarasin Dariana, Mother of the Hiironi, breaks with tradition and begins recording her memoirs in electronic form. This supplement ties into the January Living Force trilogy, "Forces of Cularin."

Dariana, Mother of the Hiironi, has been ill for some time. She has seen as much, and done as much, as any Tarasin alive today -- with the possible exception of her older sister, Liriana. Unlike her sister, though, Dariana still believes in the innate goodness of the galaxy in which she lives. She has seen a darkness, though -- some of it her sister's, and some of it darker still -- that threatens to engulf everything she loves.

She has broken with tradition and is recording her memoirs in electronic form. In this excerpt, she discusses her youth, mistakes she made, and how she began to grow into the Mother she is today.

It will be no new thing when I am criticized for submitting my life's story to this squawking, beeping bit of metal and crystal. My children -- and they are many, and I love them all -- know me for what I am. A Mother who tries, and who sometimes succeeds, and sometimes fails. They know me for a mortal.

Being mortal, I have been criticized in the past for my decisions, for not working harder to unify the Tarasin, for not fighting harder against the incursions of the offworlders, for fighting too much against the incursions of the offworlders -- I have been criticized before. When I record my life here {there is a tapping sound, slowly, of an old finger against the side of the recording mechanism} rather than trusting our oral traditions to pass down what I have learned, I can never claim to be surprised if this angers some -- or many -- of my children.

The future is so clouded, though. Darkness is everywhere. For the first time in my life, I cannot see that the Tarasin will continue to exist, and if we die out, then the wisdom of our kind will be lost to the galaxy forever. Such recordings as this, though, are timeless.

It is sad. Wisdom comes and goes. Technology lives on. And without the latter, without something made by the hands of the living, the knowledge and strength of the living cannot endure. Not as they used to.

I am hopeful that a question in your mind is, "Why, Mother, do you believe your wisdom and your life are so important, where the wisdom and lives of others were not?"

The answer is, I do not. I record my own life now, but as I speak, I will record other stories, pieces of legend, parts of the history of the Tarasin that deserve to be included in this device. When I finish speaking of my own life, I will speak of the lives of others, some who were Mothers of one irstat or another, some who never aspired to be more than hunters or warriors or wives or husbands. I will speak of those who were lost to us, and those who we found, not born to the Tarasin way, with no kampo [ed: this is the Tarasin head-fan, for which no name was previously provided] or sa'tosin [ed: these are the quills that grow from the backs of the Tarasin forearms; again, this is the first recording of the name given them by the Tarasin], but who nonetheless understand the heart of the Tarasin people. Our heart is Cularin, and long may she spin through the stars, and long may she gaze up at her twin suns, and long may her forests be warm and lush and support the life of the world.

My life... I do not view my life as something special. Those who operate this device seem to think otherwise, but I know the truth. I have lived as best I could, and when I die, it will be with no regrets, except that, perhaps, had things been different, I might have had one more day to attempt to do good.

Many things have been said of me. There are always rumors of how one in power came to be in power. Perhaps I will speak of these things. Perhaps not. It does depend, I suppose, on where the story takes me. "Forces of Cularin" Trilogy Summary Premiering at Winter Fantasy 2003, "Forces of Cularin" takes the heroes into the heart of the Tarasin lands for a trio of events that explores the origins of the stuff of nightmare for the Tarasin -- a nightmare that comes to life. And before it's all over, the heroes must bid farewell to an old friend... Begin with Episode I: Force Concession, continue with Episode II: Force Contention, and wrap it up with Episode III: Force Convention!

When I was young, I looked at the females of our irstat and saw them to be strong and proud. They led the Hiironi with wisdom and compassion, and the males looked to them for guidance. I wanted to grow to become one of those females. I sometimes fantasized about being Mother, but it would never be so simple as wishing, and having it suddenly be so.

One does not become Mother, after all, because it is what one wants. I recall a talk I had with my own mother, the one who birthed me, when I was perhaps ten years of age.

"Mother," I said, "when I grow up I want to lead the irstat."

She shook her head. "No, Dariana. If that is what you want, it will never be."

I looked at her in puzzlement, and she smiled. She had a kind smile, and kinder eyes, and I knew that she had not meant to hurt me. Still, I recall the feeling of emptiness as my mother seemed to rip the dream from my grasp.

"You become the Mother of the Hiironi because it is what the irstat wants. What you want is not important. What is best for you is not in your hands to decide. You are part of something much greater. We are Tarasin. We, of all the species who have come to Cularin, have survived in these jungles. Do you know why?"

"Because we are smarter than the others," I told her. She did not like this answer.

"We are not smarter. We are not wiser, we are not stronger. We have survived here because we are right for this place. We did not choose Cularin. Cularin chose us. Just so, you cannot choose to be a leader of the irstat. The irstat chooses you."

I do not actually know how long it took me to understand her words. It was not quick, I am sure. I did not put aside my dreaming. How does one stop dreaming of one's heart's desire? But I did stop speaking of it, and in time, I found myself doing what must be done because it was the right thing to do, and not because I had any desire to become something greater than myself.

That was one of the lessons I needed to learn. One should never strive to be greater than one's self, because the self is inherently the greatest thing in the universe. We exist as potential -- I have heard Jedi speak of us as "luminous beings," creatures that transcend the frail and imperfect bodies we inhabit -- but many of us never see this. Many of us do not believe that we are more than what we see, more than the flesh we feel, more than the blood we bleed. This is only one way that our essence, that which ties us to the Force, may manifest.

It began in dreams, in which I saw myself among the stars, and instead of feeling alone, I felt as though I were a part of each of them. In the night, I would dream, and I would find the stars, and I would find a silvery strand connecting myself to one of them, or another, until one night I saw that I was at the center of an enormous web, much like a jornisae spider's. The web ran from my own core to every one of the stars, and from there, to other glowing essences, and then I realized with more than a little horror that I was not, after all, at the center of the web. My vision pulled back and I saw myself as one point where a handful of threads met in a web that stretched from one side of the galaxy to the other, containing all living things.

I saw the power, and I knew the potential of the Force, but I was young and foolish and lacking in self-control. Knowing the interconnectedness of all things, I reasoned that this put the life and death of every creature in the universe in the hands of every other creature in the universe. Ultimately, this is true, but it should have forced me to recall my mother's words. It did not.

I was walking one night between irstats, returning home from a visit to the Nobuuri, when I heard something moving through the underbrush. It did not make quite so much noise as one of the great kilassin, but after dusk, even a pack of mulissiki can be a danger to a young Tarasin.

Something stepped from between the trees before me, blocking my path. It was a kilassin, but a young one, probably not quite a year. Still, it eyed me hungrily, and I knew that it would eat me if given the chance.

I could not outrun the kilassin, and no trees suitable for climbing were nearby, and I had no weapon other than a short spear that I carried as a walking stick. I have never been much with weapons, though.

I looked at the kilassin and saw the hunger in its eyes, and I raised my hand and thought of the web of which I was a part, drawing power from it to kill this creature before it killed me. Then I closed my fingers.

The sensation sickens me, even as a memory. I felt my fingers close around something soft, but tough. I saw the kilassin's eyes widen, and then I squeezed, and it shrieked, and then it fell over, dead. I had killed it. There was no blood on my hands, but I had never felt so unclean.

My mother had spoken truly. I was not wiser than that creature, nor smarter, nor stronger. By rights, I should have died that day. I did not. I drew upon something dark, something wrong, to keep myself alive. That was not my decision, though. It should never have been my decision. The lives and deaths of other creatures are linked to us, but not in a way that we may control. Every death of another creature is a death in the Force, which affects us all. Every birth, every life that is well-lived, strengthens us all.

For now, I grow tired. Perhaps I will speak more of this later. But this - - this is enough speech, for one day.

If you want to learn more about the Living Force campaign and how to take part in the adventure, this introduction will get you started.